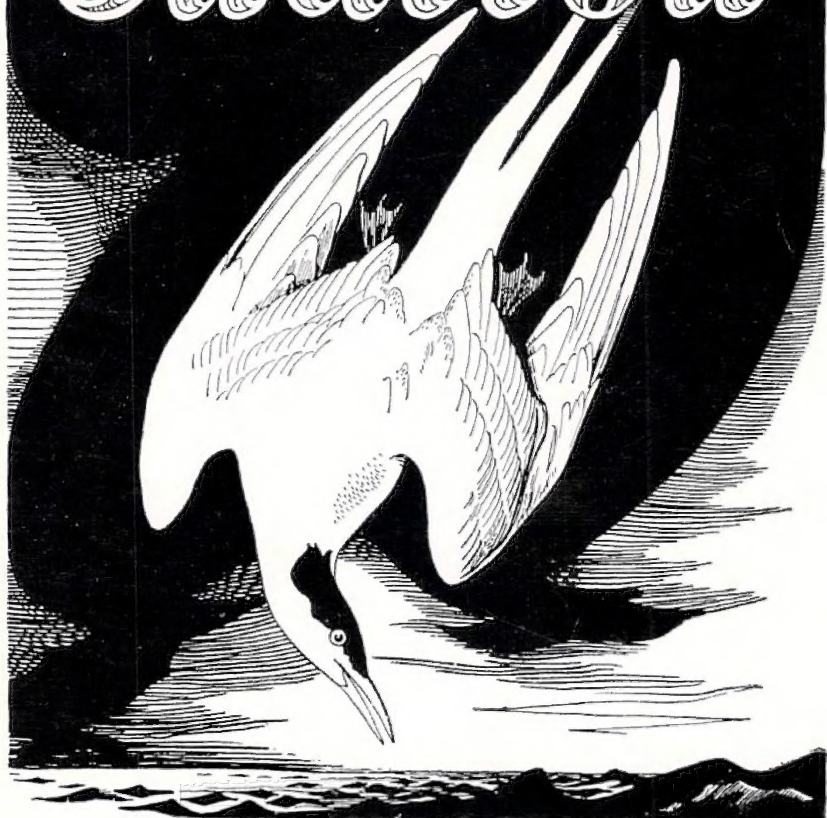


VOL. 29

1978/79

# *the* Sea Swallow



BEING THE ANNUAL REPORT  
OF THE ROYAL NAVAL  
BIRD WATCHING SOCIETY

PUBLISHED 1980

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Up Aloft  
Osprey, *Pandion haliaetus*

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## FOREWORD

The production of this Twenty-ninth edition of *Sea Swallow* marks the beginning of the end of an era - one might say the first era of the Royal Naval Birdwatching Society.

Our Chairman and Editor of *Sea Swallow*, Captain Gerald Tuck, made it known at the Annual General Meeting in December, 1979, that there was really now too much work to undertake, and that he was ready to be relieved of these duties.

It was agreed at the meeting that there would be no sudden change of Chairmanship, but through the coming year Gerald would turn over the many sides of his work to a new chairman, who would be firmly in control by the next Annual General Meeting in 1980. It was hoped that most of the turnover could be completed by June, so that the new chairman would have time to sort out the various aspects of the chairman's functions by the end of the year.

It is no exaggeration to state that the Royal Naval Birdwatching Society and Gerald Tuck have been one and the same thing since the inception of the Society 34 years ago. Gerald fashioned it, developed it, and turned it into the organisation that is now so well known in many ornithological circles all over the world. He has always been at pains to ensure that both keen laymen's observations and the scientific approach to birdwatching at sea have proceeded hand in hand. The many detailed reports on these observations undertaken at sea by members have thus found their way into more sophisticated studies, their value often far exceeding the expectations of those who made the reports.

It has been Gerald's meticulous industry, born of a lifelong enthusiasm and study of ocean birds that has modelled the Society into its present form. The culmination of his work has now found tangible form in the production of his book *A Field Guide to the Sea Birds of the World* which, I venture to predict, will be considered a valuable standard work for birdwatchers at sea for years to come.

Under his cheerful guidance a new interest has developed amongst all who pass their time in great waters and we owe him a lasting debt of gratitude for giving so much pleasure to so many people over such a long period. He will surely keep in close touch with our Society and its members.

We all wish him "all the best" in his new retirement.

Happily, Lieutenant-Commander Winton Maclure remains as honorary secretary and treasurer to co-operate with our new Chairman designate, Commander Michael Casement, Royal Navy, and executive staff. We should all have the greatest confidence in Michael in the knowledge that he will continue to maintain the objects and interests of the Royal Naval Birdwatching Society, and wish him the best of luck.

NIGEL HENDERSON, *President*

## EDITORIAL

**MEMBERSHIP.** Since the publication of *Sea Swallow* Vol. 28, 1977/78, 18 new members have joined up to date including 5 new associate members. Mention, however, was made in *Sea Swallow* Vol. 27, that a few members with whom we had lost touch for some time, had been removed from membership which now stands at 349, excluding 5 new associate members and our R.N.B.W.S. local representatives overseas.

**SEA PASSAGE REPORTS—SEABIRDS.** Up to date, 60 new sea passage reports have been received from members, and 22 LANDBIRD passage returns. In addition, 17 passages have included details of seabirds examined in the hand.

**OCEAN WEATHER SHIP, STATION LIMA (57°N, 20°W).** Our observers throughout the year on station have also provided most useful details of the seasonal passages of both seabirds and landbirds within the area.

### REPORTS FROM OTHER SOURCES.

Some very good colour transparencies and colour prints mainly of landbirds recorded within the Caribbean Sea and Mexico area have been received from both Captain R. L. Westwater, M.N., and Radio Officer N. A. Allison, M.N., during shore excursions, for which we are most grateful, and provide considerable help in future identifications.

**FINANCE.** We are indeed most grateful to the Fleet Amenities Fund for its generous donation of £500 to assist in covering R.N.B.W.S.' present annual expenses.

### SEABIRDS ON THE OCEAN ROUTES.

The "Companion Volume" to the now published *Field Guide to the Seabirds of the World* is in an advanced state, giving details of seabirds likely to be encountered along 25 separate ocean routes, and illustrated with black and white tonal sketches by Norman Arlott within the routes. It will be separate from the *Field Guide*, to which additional references are made, and publication is expected early next spring.

### SEA PASSAGES—SEABIRDS

Readers of *Sea Swallow* do not normally see the contents of actual Sea Passage Reports Seabirds, which are plotted in position at Headquarters. In the present volume, however, opportunity has been taken to publish one such example of an extensive passage report by Radio Officer N. A. Allison of part of a voyage almost around the world, including points in identification of certain seabirds and landbirds observed both at sea and ashore.



This year has resulted in considerable pressure upon your Editor to keep pace with the publication of *Sea Swallow* and other work in hand in connection with the supplement to the *Field Guide, Seabirds on the Ocean Routes*. It is hoped that members will excuse any delays which may arise.

Best wishes to all.

GERALD TUCK, *Editor*



Simeon Gull, *Larus belcheri*  
off coast of Peru

Photo: P. Meeth



## A STUDY OF AUSTRALIAN SEABIRDS

By Radio Officer N. A. Allison, M.N., R.N.B.W.S.  
on board M.V. *Anco Empress*, 20th May to 8th July, 1979

The route approached Western Australia from Suez via the Indian Ocean making for Perth, thence round Cape Leewin, across the Great Australian Bight to Melbourne, around Cape Schanck to Botany Bay, Sydney, and northward to Townsville in Queensland.

The first sighting at 04°35'N, 57°32'E was of Sooty Terns (*Sterna fuscata*), identified by their sooty-black upperparts, short white area above the bill, not extending beyond the eye, white underparts and black deeply forked tails. When feeding they do not appear to dive below the surface, plucking small fish and squid and rarely landing on the sea. They also feed during dusk and at night. They were seen again at 12°07'S, 73°58'E, this time being harried by several Southern Skuas (*Catharacta skua*), and at 31°39'S, 114°55'E while approaching Perth.

Here, a whole host of seabirds began to appear, including the first Yellow-nosed Albatross (*Diomedea chlororhynchos*) with its brownish-black upperwings and tail, white elsewhere, with underwings edged with clearly defined thin black margins. The bill is black with a yellow upper mandible ridge and orange-red tip. Legs flesh coloured. Also seen was the White-chinned Petrel (*Procellaria aequinoctialis*), a heavy dark Petrel with a white chin and long, massive bluish or greenish-horn bill. Closing Perth, more Southern Skuas appeared and the lightly built Silver Gull (*Larus novaehollandiae*), with its red bill and legs.

In Kwinana Bay (near Fremantle) I saw Pied Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax varius*), and many Australian Gannets (*Sula serrator*).

Leaving Kwinana on 4th June, the ship rounded Cape Leewin and we were at once in the Albatross area. The first to be seen was a magnificent Wandering Albatross (*Diomedea exulans*), with its wing-span of 9½-nearly 11 ft. Most of these birds were juveniles or immatures in many variations of plumage. The most juvenile were almost completely chocolate-brown save for their white heads, some white under the wings, and brown tails. Others, more advanced, showed white diamond patches in the middle or lower edges of their upperwings or small areas of brown flakes on their bodies. Full adults were easily recognised with their solid black wing tips, white upperwing surfaces with a little dark speckling, and narrow black bordering on the trailing edges of their underwings. The massive bill is pale flesh-coloured, as are its legs. They tend to fly with a characteristic hump-backed attitude.

I was also fortunate in sighting a Royal Albatross (*Diomedea epemophora sanfordi*), the upperwings showing heavier dark areas

covering almost half of its upperwings, the legs greyish. Amongst this array, the Black-browed Albatross (*Diomedea melanophris*) was sweeping backwards and forwards in the ship's wake, its upperwing surface brownish-black, its white underwings broadly edged by smudgy blackish margins, and its stout bill yellow with a pink tip in adults. Present also was an all-dark Northern Giant Petrel (*Pterodroma halli*), its pale eye visible against its darkish grey body and its horn-coloured bill. The Great-winged Petrel (*Pterodroma macroptera*) was also observed. This large-winged Petrel with a dark stubby bill and legs, and sometimes showing a greyish patch on chin and throat, unlike the White-chinned Petrel, normally pays no attention to ships. At this time the small Dove Prion (*Pachyptila desolata*) was also seen.

At 36°03'S, 123°21'E a Light-mantled Sooty Albatross (*Phoebastria palmetrata*) came into view, distinguished from the Sooty Albatross by its ash-grey back and underparts, greyish-brown wings, conspicuous white eye-ring and its black bill with a narrow pale blue stripe along its lower mandible. Here, too, the unmistakable attractive Cape Pigeons (*Daption capensis*) were zig-zagging behind the ship.

The ship now put in to Melbourne, going first to Geelong. Silver Gulls, Australian Gannets, Pied Cormorants, Little Pied Cormorants, and the Black-faced Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax fuscescens*) were seen, also Crested Terns, with greenish-yellow bills.

The large Pacific Gull (*Larus pacificus*) was also present, identified by its large size, massive yellow bill with red tip, yellow legs, and broad sub-terminal black band across its white tail.

#### WORKS OF REFERENCE

- A Field Guide to the Seabirds of the World. G. S. Tuck. Collins 1978.  
Birds in the Australian High Country. H. J. Frith. Reed 1969.  
Handbook of Australian Seabirds. D. L. Serventy, John Warham, Vincent Serventy, A. H. and A. W. Reed.



## NOTES ON BIRDS OF VITILEVU AND VANUALEVU ISLANDS, FIJI

By Radio Officer Nigel A. Allison, R.N.B.W.S.  
on M.V. *Anco Empress* from 22nd-29th June 1979

The vessel approached the Fiji Islands from the west and headed for Vitilevu (Southern or Lower Island). Then via the Vanula reef passage we passed Nadi and headed for Lautoka on the west side of the island. At sea, on the approaches, the only birds seen were the Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*) and the Crested Tern (*Thalasseus bergii*). The Brown Booby, with its light bill and clearly defined brown and white, was easily identified, as was the Yellow-billed Crested Tern. The first birds to be seen ashore were a member of the Bulbul family (*Pycnonotidae*) which in Bulbul fashion was all dark with a dark crest and white under-tail coverts tinged with red feathers, and a raucous member of the Myna family with darkish appearance, yellow bill and legs, a yellow facial area and white flashes on the wings in flight.

The next bird to be seen was the impressive Reef Heron (*Demigretta sacra*; Fijian name Belo), which is an interesting species as it has a blue and white phase of colouring. I first saw the blue phase and thus a blue Heron with yellow bill and legs. The blue variation are said to outnumber the white ones by over two to one. This Heron was seen to be standing in shallow sea water waiting patiently for fish just as the European species does. Next seen was the White-rumped Swiftlet (*Collocalia spodiopygia*; Fijian name Lakaba) which flew around on the wing, catching insects and such like. One reason that Fiji is comparatively clear of the mosquito is put down to the copious amounts of these insects eaten by the Swiftlets. These birds construct nests in caves or under overhanging rocks. Also seen at this time was the White-collared Kingfisher (*Halcyon chloris*; Fijian names Sese, Lasi and Secala) which sits on telegraph wires or some such perch watching for prey. Fish form only a small part of its daily diet, and it will take other forms of food, sometimes even small birds. This bird has metallic blue upper surfaces, with very large dark bill. Metallic blue head cap with yellow line over the eye, and blue shading below the eye. Breast plumage of white, cream or orange can be observed. The black and white White-breasted Woodswallow (*Artamus leucorhynchus*; Fijian names, Vukase, Vuase and Sikorere) was then seen, also on telegraph poles and fences. These birds are not really Swallows at all, but belong to an Australian family that have spread to Fiji. However, they are superb fliers and make very exciting watching. They are very territorial and attack vigorously any intruders to their area.

Leaving Lautoka, via the route inside the reefs, we headed for Labasa on Vanualevu (Northern or Upper Island), and passed

through Bligh Water where Captain Bligh had gone at the time of the Bounty Mutiny. Both blue and white phases of the Reef Heron, Crested Terns and a pair of Frigate Birds were seen which I believe were Great Frigate Birds (*Fregata minor*) because the male didn't have white underwing patches.

Arriving at Labasa, the Myna was again in evidence; however, the Bulbul was absent. Of previously seen birds, the Kingfisher and Swiftlet were visible but not the Woodswallow. No Plovers, Dotterels or Sandpipers breed in Fiji, but there are many visits for the summer months or on migratory paths.

On a walk ashore near Labasa I was able to see a Vanikoro Broadbill (*Myiagra vanikorensis*; Fijian name Sia sia), so called because it is thought that this bird originally came from the Santa Cruz Islands and one of these islands is called Vanikoro. In Fiji, isolated groups of these birds have developed distinctive colouring and dialects, and will buzz Goshawks and the like. Of the three species of Honeyeater on Fiji I was able to see two of them. Firstly the Hummingbird like Orange-breasted Honeyeater (*Myzomela jugularis*; Fijian name Delakula) which extracts nectar from flowers. Secondly, the Wattled Honeyeater (*Foulehaio carunculata*; Fijian name Kikau, Sevau, Sovau and Kaisau) which, though not brightly coloured being only brown with a yellow facial stripe, is a very interesting bird. They appear to dislike Bulbuls and pursue them endlessly. They are very good songbirds and apparently are one of the dominant voices in the dawn chorus. This bird is probably one of the first birds to be seen by a visiting naturalist. That concluded my bird observations, but also of interest to a visiting naturalist are the large numbers of Grey Nurse Sharks visible even in harbours. Indeed, if one goes for a walk along a coast road with the sea lapping at one side and pools on the other, the observations that can be made are really excellent. Thus Fiji was a beautiful visit for the amateur naturalist as myself.

#### WORKS OF REFERENCE

Birds of Fiji in Colour. J. Belcher. Collins. Auckland 1972.



## SOME BIRDS OF THE MARQUESAS ISLANDS, SOUTH PACIFIC

By Radio Officer Nigel A. Allison, R.N.B.W.S.  
on M.V. *Anco Empress* on 8th July, 1979

The Marquesas Islands form two distinct groups of islands, lying between the parallels 7-50S and 10-35S and meridians 138-25N and 140-50W, which being some fifty miles apart were discovered at different times and thus for some time were known by different names.

The southeastern group was discovered by Alvaro de Mendanao in 1595, and called *Islas de Marquesas de Mendoca* in honour of the Viceroy of Peru who had instigated the expedition. The northwestern group, however, was not discovered until 1791 by Captain Ingraham of the United States Merchant Navy in a vessel called "Hope". In May of 1842 the whole archipelago was annexed by the French and within the next few years the French rule was firmly established.

The islands, which are of volcanic origin, are very high and made up of mostly black basalt rock, but where the higher parts of the islands have been crushed together by the volcanic action great gullies and valleys have been formed. These valleys are natural waterways from the mountain tops, lush with vegetation. Palm trees can be seen at the bottoms of these valleys and extend right up to the sandy shore.

The vessel approached the southeastern group from the west and passed within 2 miles of Hiva Oa, and the area mentioned is where the study took place.

The first birds seen when approaching the islands were members of the Tern family namely the Sooty Tern (*Sterna fuscata*) and the White Tern (*Gygis alba*). Both these Terns were seen fishing in great numbers near schools of Porpoise. The White Tern particularly is a beautiful little bird to watch, with its all-white colouring and black eye ring. This bird was seen to dive at the water but only go as far as the surface; it never actually entered the water, and I believe this is one of its characteristics. These birds were seen some forty or fifty miles from the islands.

As we got nearer to the island we began to see members of the Booby family. First, the apparently more deep-sea minded Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*), identified by light bill and sharply contrasting brown uppers and white underneath. Next, an immature Red-footed Booby (*Sula sula*) was seen, this bird being in its intermediate phase. It had a grey/brown head with dark brown wings and back and a white tail and rear. The white rear made it easy to see the Booby's red legs which proved identification.

This was followed by an immature Blue-faced or Masked Booby (*Sula dactylatra*), identified by black trailing edges to upper

wing, light brown head and remainder of upper wing; both head and wings having slight white mottled effect, and finally the bird had a dark tail.

The Spectacled Tern (*Sterna lunata*) was next identified and now all three mentioned Terns were together, fishing near the islands.

Nearing the island of Hiva Oa we saw a White-tailed Tropic Bird (*Phaethon lepturus lepturus*), which was a very impressive sight. This was definitely *P. lepturus* with heavy black markings on upper wing outer feathers and also near the body on the rear of the wing. The tail seemed to have a pink tinge, certainly not as red as the *P. rubricauda*, but more a light shading. I don't know whether this is normal or not.

I had been able to see the forms of Frigate Birds circling overhead, but because of distance was unable to identify the species. I happened to glance up, and directly over the vessel five of these birds had taken up station and some of these birds had white heads. I was able to identify the adult male Lesser Frigate Bird (*Fregata ariel*) by the white patches under the wing near the body. Since the immatures were with these adults I presume they also were *F. ariel*. The immature has a white head and neck and a dark chest band which separates the white head from a white chest, and had white markings extending from the white chest on to the wings and this is where the white underwing areas would eventually be. These birds then turned away.

About this time we sighted a school of porpoise numbering 30-40 which were obviously fishing and within minutes a great number of birds were clustered overhead diving and taking scraps from the surface.

The Frigate Birds returned, also Terns came in, diving into the water. Also present were a number of White-capped Noddy (*Anous minutus*), identified by the very white cap and all-dark plumage. Also the wedge-shaped tail which was slightly forked. These were accompanied by the Blue-Grey Noddy (*Procelsterna cerulea*), smaller than the *A. minutus*, and the upper body and wing slate-grey. The bird had a black ring round its eye and black bill and legs.

Lastly, I sighted the Pacific race of the Audubons Shearwater (*Puffinus l'h. l'herminieri*), a small sturdy Shearwater with dark brown upperparts, white underparts and a black under tail covert. This bird was doing its characteristic several rapid wing beats and then short glides over the water surface. The vessel then departed these waters and headed out into the Pacific.

#### WORKS OF REFERENCE

Sea Birds of the World. Tuck Collins, 1979.



## OCEAN WEATHER SHIP REPORTS 1978/1979 SEABIRDS

By J. H. Agnew, R.N.B.W.S.

Station Lima, the only Atlantic Weather Station manned by British weather ships, yielded (again) almost a complete year of continuous observations. Only July had a reduced number of daily reports - 21 days on station.

For this continued work we have to thank R. C. L. Aran, R. J. Burness, and Met. staff of the *Admiral FitzRoy*, D. A. MacKenzie, Chief Officer, as well as the Deck Officers of the *Admiral Beaufort*.

The daily counts throughout the year totalled 23073 sightings of Fulmars, with 208 of those recorded as Blue Phase. Approximately the same proportions of one to the other as last year. Kittiwakes' total count was 8163 birds, of which 2165 were immature ( $26\frac{1}{2}\%$  as against last year's 19%). No sightings were recorded of Leach's Storm-Petrel, Cory's Shearwater, Common Gull or Little Gull, each of which made the "occasional sighting" table in the last *Sea Swallow*. Having said that, D. A. MacKenzie reported (11th February) "one small Tern-like Gull close to stationary vessel. Tentatively identified as adult Little Gull in winter plumage".

Although not possessing a DoT passenger certificate, the *Admiral Beaufort* had an immature Glaucous Gull take up residence on the foc's'le deck on the 2nd of January. On the 4th, in calm weather, it settled on the sea about 150 yards from the stationary ship, where individuals from a circling flight of about 20 Fulmars made close dives at it. A couple of hours later it was back on the foc's'le. On the 7th it moved to the after-deck where it was continually disturbed by human bodies going about their duties, until it flew off and settled heavily on the water (heavy from food or fatigue). Stormy conditions prevailed, and it was not seen again.

# OCEAN WEATHER SHIP OBSERVATIONS SUMMARY OF SIGHTINGS, STATION LIMA (57°N, 20°W)

OCTOBER 1978 TO SEPTEMBER 1979

	Oc	No	De	Ja	Fe	Ma	Ap	My	Ju	Jy*	Au	Se
Fulmar Petrels	o	o	o	o	o	x	x	x	o	o	o	o
Great Shearwater	—										o	
Sooty Shearwater	—							—		—	—	
Manx Shearwater					—		—	—		—		—
Wilson's Storm-Petrel	—											
British Storm-Petrel		—									—	—
Gannet					—	—	—	o	—	—	—	—
Great Skua	—	—			—	—	o	o	—	o	—	o
Pomarine Skua	—						—	—	—	—		—
Arctic Skua	—								—	—		—
Long-tailed Skua	—							o	—	—		
Herring Gull					—		o	—	—			
Lesser B.-backed Gull	—	—	—			—	o	o	o	o	—	o
Great B.-backed Gull	—	—	o	—	—	—	o	o	—	—	—	—
Glaucous Gull	—	—	—	—	—	—	—					—
Iceland Gull			—									—
Kittiwake	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	x	o	o	o	o
Black-headed Gull								o		—	—	
Terns: Arctic											—	
Common									—			—
Little Auk	—	—				—						
Guillemots	—b	—b							—	—		
Razorbill									—			
Puffin	—								—			
Sabine's Gull				—								
Grey-necked Phalarope	—											
Shag	—											

Key: — Occasional sightings  
 o Average 1 to 49 daily  
 x More than 50  
 \* Only 21 days of observation  
 b Brunnich's



## LANDBIRD SUMMARY

By Commander M. B. Casement, R.N.

The wealth and quality of records from many sources have again kept me busy this year, and the details are shown in the following tables (A to J). The extracts from the Met. Logs of Merchant ships this year have included some remarkable sketches and photographs which have been invaluable in clinching identification: my annual thanks to Mr J. D. Brown of the Meteorological Office.

The most surprising observation from Ocean Weather Station Lima is the Crane (*Grus grus*) on 15 Oct. '79; it must have been well and truly lost! The passage of Merlins (*Falco columbarius*) through this area, both in spring and autumn, is now well established and their preying on other migrant birds is, as for other Falcons, clearly an important factor in their survival during long sea passages. The capture and beheading of a Stone Curlew (*Burhinus oedienemus*) on 14 Apr. '79 is surely very remarkable. Not only has this species never, to my knowledge, been recorded from this area before, but a Merlin is only three-quarters of its size.

Study of the tables will show very much the same pattern as in previous years - the usual predominance of raptors, owls, herons and hirundines, and of course the unmistakable Hoopoe (*Upupa epops*). The Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) in particular occurs no less than seven times in five different sea areas. Of the Owl family, the Scops (*Otus scops*) is unusual and appears both in the Persian Gulf (Table H twice) and the Philippine Sea (Table J). The record of Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*) in the Mediterranean (Table E) is also noteworthy.

Passerine migration is especially well recorded in the Mediterranean (Table E) and interesting records this year included Golden Oriole (*Oriolus oriolus*), Olivaceous Warbler (*Hippolais pallida*), Bluethroat (*Luscinia svecia*) and Marmora's Warbler (*Sylvia sarda*).

In Table C (West Atlantic) there is a wealth of species recorded in autumn migration, including those examined in the hand by Captain Chilman, which gives some idea of the scale and variety of casualties caused by tropical storms (Juliet).

Table D demonstrates once again the variety of birds which are recorded regularly in the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico. The density of migration, especially in autumn, is clearly of massive proportions and the casualties caused by bad weather dramatic, as was graphically described by Captain Chilman, in his fascinating article on spring migration in last year's *Sea Swallow* (28, pp. 11-14). Incidentally, I was interested to read therein of the Osprey which apparently made use of the ship's funnel fumes to gain altitude. This is reminiscent of the observations recorded in *British Birds* (Vol. 72:15:May '79) of White Storks (*Ciconia*

*ciconia*) using thermals created by oil flares in Algeria, and of a Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*) circling above a hot-air balloon to gain height near Bristol. There is obviously survival value for soaring birds to use ship's funnel fumes in this way when travelling over the open sea, and I ask R.N.B.W.S. members to give special, and critical, observation for more examples of this phenomenon.

The most obviously important factor affecting the survival of migrant landbirds at sea is the availability of food, and there are many examples this year of birds feeding on insects available on-board. These include Great Grey Shrike (*Lanius excubitor*) in the Gibraltar Straits (Table A), Purple Martins (*Progne subis*) in the Caribbean (Table D), pipits and other species in the Gulf of Aden (Table F), numerous species in the Persian Gulf (Table H) and Mediterranean (Table F), and even Common Sandpiper (*Tringa hypoleucos*) and Sanderling (*Calidris alba*) in the Sea of Japan (Table J). In several cases the abundance of flies, etc., was clearly dictated by the type of cargo - of dressed timber (M.V. *Sugar Trader*), and of potatoes (M.V. *Balmoral Universal*).

Not so widely recognised, however, is the similar need for drinking water, and there are 2 records this year of Merlin (Table A) and Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*) (Table B) drinking rainwater. Another record of interest is the use of floating seaweed as a resting place by Sanderling (Table J).

The observation of landbirds at sea is now, after many years, beginning to settle into a recognisable pattern, and in order to establish this, I am now engaged in a mammoth task of setting up a card index system which will help for the future. It should eventually be possible to give advice on the pattern of occurrences of certain species world-wide, and the main migrating movements in certain sea areas. To this end, therefore, I ask all R.N.B.W.S. observers to continue to send in their records to me in as full detail as possible. In particular, I must stress the need for accurate descriptions and/or sketches of recognition features in order to validate the identification of species. Also, it is of enormous help to me in plotting them if positional information includes the nearest relevant point of land from whence they probably came, or are heading for. Many observers are now doing this and earn my grateful thanks.

Finally, in congratulating the sterling efforts of the growing band of active members from the Merchant Navy, I must also record with regret that for the first time ever I received no observations this year from the Royal Navy. I realise that with enclosed bridges, and Ops. Room control, and also the sheer pace of life onboard, a warship on passage is no longer an ideal bird-watching platform, and opportunities peacefully to observe and record birds at sea are now much reduced, but that cannot be the full explanation. I expect our younger R.N. members to rise to this challenge, and look forward to a spate of records from them in 1980. Estab-



lish an organisation onboard your ship to let you know of any bird sighted, provide a log book on the bridge to record the relevant details, make sure you have a supply of R.N.B.W.S. record forms before your next trip to sea and use them. And do, please, feel free to write to me at any time. Good luck!

# OCEAN WEATHER SHIPS STATION REPORTS OF LANDBIRDS

Analysis by Commander M. B. Casement, R.N.

The following reports have been received during the period 1978-79 (up to 1 October '79) from weather ships on Station Lima (57°N 20°W) - 210nm WSW Rockall, 450nm S. Iceland.

1978		
7-31 Aug	Admiral Beaufort	Ch. Off. D. A. McKenzie
26 Sept-20 Oct	Admiral Beaufort	Ch. Off. D. A. McKenzie
21 Oct-11 Nov	Admiral FitzRoy	R. C. L. Aran
12 Nov-1 Dec	Admiral Beaufort	Ch. Off. D. A. McKenzie
1979		
21 Dec-19 Jan	Admiral FitzRoy	R. N. Burness
4-24 Feb	Admiral Beaufort	Ch. Off. D. A. McKenzie
25 Feb-17 Mar	Admiral FitzRoy	R. C. L. Aran
18 Mar-7 Apr	Admiral Beaufort	Ch. Off. D. A. McKenzie
8-28 Apr	Admiral FitzRoy	R. C. L. Aran
11-21 May	Admiral Beaufort	Ch. Off. D. A. McKenzie
1-9 Jun	Admiral FitzRoy	R. C. L. Aran



Landbird species were recorded on the dates shown in the following table:

	1978	1979
Merlin ( <i>Falco columbarius</i> ) (see below)		14 Apr, 18-19 May (M), 6 Oct (F), 7 Oct (F) 10 Oct (F), 15 Oct (F) 15 Oct. S 2 hrs 15 Oct. Arr N, dep S. Wind 110°/17 kt
Kestrel ( <i>Falco tinnunculus</i> )		
Crane ( <i>Grus grus</i> )		
Oystercatcher ( <i>Hymatopus ostralegus</i> )	20 Oct (6)	
Dunlin ( <i>Calidris alpina</i> )	19 Oct	9 Jun
Ringed Plover ( <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> )	28 Aug	
Turnstone ( <i>Arenaria interpres</i> )	30 Aug, 2 Oct, 8 Oct (3)	
Whimbrel ( <i>Numenius phaeopus</i> )	6 Oct	15 May (3), 20 May (3), dep N
Grey Phalarope ( <i>Phalaropus fulicarius</i> )	13 Oct	
Stone Curlew ( <i>Burhinus oedipicus</i> )		14 Apr. Killed by Merlin. Sent BM
Short-eared Owl ( <i>Asio flammeus</i> )	11-12 Oct, circling ship	11 Oct. Chasing terns
Tawny Owl ( <i>Strix aluco</i> )		11 May
Meadow Pipit ( <i>Anthus pratensis</i> )	28 Aug	21 May, 21 Sept (6), 8 Oct (2), 11 Oct. exhausted. Died, fed to Merlin
Willow Warbler/Chiffchaff ( <i>Phylloscopus</i> sp.)		4 Oct
Stonechat ( <i>Saxicola torquata</i> )	20 Oct	29 Sept. Caught, caged, died
Wheatear ( <i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i> )	4 Oct (6)	11 May (4), 18-19 May (2), 26 Sept, 5 Oct, 6 Oct (2), 7 Oct (2), 8 Oct (2), 9 Oct (2)
Robin ( <i>Erithacus rubecula</i> )		
Fieldfare ( <i>Turdus pilaris</i> )	20 Oct (6)	
Redwing ( <i>Turdus iliacus</i> )	5 Nov (2), 21 Dec	13 Apr (2), 3 Jun, 7 Oct (4), 14 Dec (2), 15 Oct, 16 Oct 8 Apr. S. Died. Sent BM
Lapland Bunting ( <i>Calcarius lapponicus</i> )		
Snow Bunting ( <i>Plectrophenax nivalis</i> )	21 Dec	
Brambling ( <i>Fringilla montifringilla</i> ) *		12 Oct (F). Died. X
Twite ( <i>Carduelis flavirostris</i> )		8-9 Oct
Starling ( <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i> )		16 Oct (5)

Merlin. 6 different individuals. Most caught and ate birds—Stone Curlew on 14 Apr, 3 Wheatears 18-19 May, 1 Wheatear 6 Oct, Redwing 15 Oct. Two, both females, were caught and caged and fed on birds found dead onboard.

\* One bird examined in the hand form was received from R. C. L. Aran.

## SEA REPORT SHEETS

Analysis by Commander M. B. Casement, R.N.

The following sea reports of landbirds seen at sea were received during 1978/79 (up to 1st December 1979). Extracts are shown in the tables, using the observer's initials as shown:

Radio Officer N. A. Allison, M.N. (NAA)	M.V. <i>Anco Empress</i> M.V. <i>Anco Stane</i>
Captain W. A. Murison, M.N. (WAM)	M.V. <i>Mairangi Bay</i>
Captain R. L. Webster, M.N. (RLW)	M.S. <i>Davao</i>
First Officer R. P. Harris, M.N. (RPH)	S.S. <i>Nova Shore</i>
Radio Officer M. G. Finn, M.N. (MGF)	M.V. <i>City of Exeter</i>
Radio Officer W. Weitkovitz, M.N. (WW)	S.S. <i>Columbus California</i> S.S. <i>Hans Sachs</i>
Captain D. M. Simpson, M.N. (DMS)	M.V. <i>Bigorange XI</i> M.V. <i>Pacific Supplier</i> M.V. <i>Pacific Builder</i> M.V. <i>Pacific Teak</i>
Captain J. K. Currie, M.N. (JKC)	M.V. <i>Balmoral Universal</i>
Chief Officer R. W. Joughin, M.N. (RWJ)	M.V. <i>Dart Canada</i>
P. G. Morris, M.N. (PGM)	M.V. <i>Alain</i>
Cadet T. M. Barry, M.N. (TMB)	M.V. <i>Clan MacGregor</i>
Captain R. R. Will, M.N. (RRW)	M.V. <i>Clan Menzies</i>
Captain A. S. Young, M.N. (ASY)	M.V. <i>Venetia</i> M.V. <i>Northamptonshire</i>
Captain K. Salwegter, Neth. M.N. (KS)	M.V. <i>Amstelmeer</i>
Captain P. W. G. Chilman, M.N. (PWGC)	S.S. <i>Lembulus</i> S.S. <i>Litiopa</i>
Chief Engineer K. E. Hart, M.N. (KEH)	S.S. <i>Gari</i>
Engineer S. J. Hingston, M.N. (SJH)	M.V. <i>Sugar Trader</i>

Thirteen bird "examined in the hand" reports were received during the period - twelve from PWGC and one from KEH. Details are shown in the appropriate tables, as indicated by the notation X in the Remarks column. BM indicates that corpse was sent to the British Museum, Tring.



## ANALYSIS BY SEA AREAS

This analysis includes reports from the following sources:

- a) R.N.B.W.S. Sea Report sheets (Landbirds) - observers' initials are shown in the appropriate tables;
- b) Meteorological Log Returns (identifiable species only) - indicated by MET.

Observations are shown in the following tables by sea areas:

Table A	East Atlantic (East of 30°W) including Biscay and Iberlant
B	North Sea
C	West Atlantic (West of 30°W) and South Atlantic
D	Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico
E	Mediterranean
F	Red Sea and Gulf of Aden
G	Indian Ocean/Arabian Sea
H	Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman
I	Pacific
J	Philippine Sea, South China Sea and Sea of Japan

TABLE A  
EAST ATLANTIC (EAST OF 30°W) INCLUDING  
BISCAY AND IBERLANT

1978

Date (time)	Obs.	Species (Latin name)	Posn. (nearest land)	Remarks, wind, weather, etc.
5 Jan	MET	Kestrel sp. ( <i>Falco tinnunculus</i> )	8°30'N 23°40'W 375' S C. Verde Is	M.V. <i>Swedish Wasa</i> . S 1 hr
2 May	MET	Hobby ( <i>Falco subbuteo</i> ) (juv)	33°30'N 14°W 220' E Madeira	S.S. <i>British Pioneer</i> Attempted to catch "swallow"
17 Jun	SJH	Turnstone ( <i>Arenaria interpres</i> )	48°37'N 7°18'W 85' SW Scilly Is.	S 1½ hrs. Dep N. Wind NE/6-7
18 Jul	MET	Unidentified "Hawk" Juv Osprey ( <i>Pandion haliaetus</i> ) ?	51°28'N 28°37'W 550' W Ireland	M.V. <i>Arctic Truk</i>
3 Sept	RWJ	Sanderling ( <i>Calidris alba</i> ) (2)	48°30'N 12°53'W 200' SSW C. Clear, Eire	S. Drinking rainwater. SW/6, heavy rain, vis 1nm
12 Sept	MET	Hoopoe ( <i>Upupa epops</i> ) Whitethroat ( <i>Sylvia communis</i> ) (6) <i>Phylloscopus</i> Warblers (30 approx.) Swallow ( <i>Hirundo rustica</i> ) Woodchat Shrike ( <i>Lanius senator</i> ) Dove sp.? (20 approx)	16°36'N 17°36'W 65' W Senegal	M.V. <i>Apapa Palm</i> . Wind WNW/3 backing SW. Temp. 28°C
16 Sept	MET	Great Grey Shrike ( <i>Lanius excubitor</i> )	Western Straits of Gibraltar	M.V. <i>Frontier</i> . Ate 4 moths
17 Sept	MET	Firecrest ( <i>Regulus ignicapillus</i> )	58°40'N 6°W 12' N Lewis	M.V. <i>Rubens</i>
18 Sept	MET	Whinchat ( <i>Saxicola rubetra</i> ) Pied Flycatcher ( <i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i> )	40°30'N 10°W Off C. Finisterre	M.V. <i>Frontier</i> . (3/O R. A. Eades)

## ANALYSIS BY SEA AREAS—TABLE A 1978 (continued)

Date (time)	Obs.	Species (Latin name)	Posn. (nearest land)	Remarks, wind, weather, etc.
		Meadow Pipit ( <i>Anthus pratensis</i> ) Whitethroat Kestrel (2) Turtle Dove ( <i>Streptopelia turtur</i> )		
26 Sept	MET	Merlin ( <i>Falco columbarius</i> )	49°46' N 8°38' W 80' W Scilly Is.	M.V. C.P. Voyager. Ate "sparrow"
1 Oct	NAA	Merlin? (F)	48°27' N 14°20' W 270' SW C. Clear	S. Drinking rainwater. Wind NW/15
23 Oct	MET	Curlew/Whimbrel ( <i>Numenius</i> sp)	29°40' N 31° W 600' SSW Azores 780' NW C. Verde Is.	M.V. Wild Auk

## 1979

7 Apr	MET	Curlew/Whimbrel Barn Owl ( <i>Tyto alba</i> )	36°27' N 13°10' W 240' WSW C. St. Vincent	M.V. Roscastle
24 Apr	MET	Cape Rail ( <i>Rallus caerulescens</i> )	30°S 14°E 150' SW Africa	M.V. Maersk Cadet
28 Apr	MET	Whimbrel ( <i>Numenius phaeopus</i> ) (2)	46°10' N 7°30' W Biscay, 160' N Spain	S. S.S. British Dragon
12 May	MET	Turtle Dove	46°35' N 18° W 450' NW C. Finisterre	S 2 hrs. M.V. Columbia Star
20 May	MET	Short-eared Owl ( <i>Asio flammeus</i> )	46°56' N 22°17' W 650' NNE Azores 800' SW Eire	M.V. Oropesa Wind NW/6. Low W of Eire. S onboard
21 May	MET	African Jacana (juv) ( <i>Actophilornis africanus</i> )	22°42' S 01°42' W 450' SSE St. Helena 850' W SW Africa	M.V. Sugela (Capt. A. S. Grant)
17 Jun	WAM	Racing Pigeons	39°35' N 11°00' W 75' W of Portugal	Fed. 10 rem 18th, 8 on 19th. 2 dep NNE on 20th, 3°N 13°W, 75' W Spanish Sahara. 1 rem 1600/21st



## TABLE B

## NORTH SEA

1978

<i>Date (time)</i>	<i>Obs.</i>	<i>Species (Latin name)</i>	<i>Posn. (nearest land)</i>	<i>Remarks, wind, weather, etc.</i>
2 Aug	MET	Short-eared Owl ( <i>Asio flammeus</i> )	58°38' N 02°56' E	S.S. <i>Esso Warwickshire</i>
1230-1500			80' W Stavanger	S 2½ hrs
2 Nov	SJH	Blackbird ( <i>Turdus merula</i> ) (1M, 1F)	En route	Overcast, fog patches, drizzle.
		Chaffinch ( <i>Fringilla coelebs</i> ) (1M, 1F)	Esbjerg	Barometer falling.
		Starling ( <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i> ) (18)	53°48' N 5°18' E	All sighted onboard. Fed
		Redpoll ( <i>Acanthis flammea</i> ) (F)		breadcrumbs
		Brambling ( <i>Fringilla montifringilla</i> )		
		Fieldfare ( <i>Turdus pilarus</i> )		

1979

11 Jan 1530	MET	Long-eared Owl (4) ( <i>Asio otus</i> )	20' off Elbe estuary	M.V. <i>Welsh City</i> . S. Snow blizzard. Strong winds
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The following species were recorded by RPH (S.S. *Nova Shore*) during August and September in vicinity of Amoco Inde and Leman Gasfield (53°20' N, 2°30' E Norfolk)

Twenty-five

Aug.	Sep.	
8		Turnstone ( <i>Arenaria interpres</i> )
15		Swift ( <i>Apus apus</i> )
19	2	Lapwing ( <i>Vanellus vanellus</i> )

## ANALYSIS BY SEA AREAS—TABLE B 1979 (continued)

Date (time)	Obs.	Species (Latin name)	Posn. (nearest land)	Remarks, wind, weather, etc.
Aug. 19, 24, 25	Sept. 2, 9	<i>Phylloscopus</i> Warbler (sp. n.k.)		
23	2	Oystercatcher ( <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> )		
23	9	Wheatear ( <i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i> )		
23		Grasshopper Warbler ( <i>Locustella naevia</i> )		
23		Dunlin ( <i>Calidris alpina</i> )		Drank water

TABLE C

## WEST ATLANTIC (WEST OF 30°W)

1978

Date (time)	Obs.	Species (Latin name)	Posn. (nearest land)	Remarks, wind, weather, etc.
14 Jul	KS	Common Grackle (6) ( <i>Quiscalus quiscula</i> ) Tricoloured Blackbird (8) ( <i>Agelaius tricolor</i> )	40°41' N 67°23' W 30' SE C. Cod	
6 Aug	MET	Osprey ( <i>Pandion haliaetus</i> )	30°10' N 73°40' W 350' SSE C. Haneras	S.S. Partula
12 Aug	MET	Cedar Waxwing ( <i>Bombycilla cedrorum</i> ) Swallow ( <i>Hirundo rustica</i> )	53°17' N 43°37' W 500' NE Newfoundland	M.V. C. P. Voyager
3 Sept	RWJ	Sora Rail (juv) ( <i>Porzana carolina</i> )	42°N 49°W 345' SE C. Race	Died
18-19 Sept	MET	Merlin (2F) ( <i>Falco columbarius</i> )	44°N 60°W E C. Race	M.V. Atlantic Project Feeding on "finches"

21 Sept	MET	Merlin (F)	30°18'N 57°45'W 400'E Bermuda	M.V. <i>Gela</i> . S 20 mins
7 Oct	WW	Brown Thrasher ( <i>Toxostoma rufum</i> )	26°36'N 75°51'W	Wind NE. S
9 Oct	PWGC	Palm Warbler ( <i>Dendroica palmarum</i> )	90'NE Bahamas	S few hours
2130		Black-throated Green Warbler (F or juv) ( <i>Dendroica virens</i> )	20°25'N 66°45'W 117'N Puerto Rico	Struck 00W in dark. X. Released 2230. Wind NW/4. Overcast. Lightning. Tropical storm Juliet 80'E
10 Oct	PWGC	Ovenbird ( <i>Seiurus aurocapillus</i> )		Found dead. X. BM
11 Oct	PWGC	Blackpoll Warbler ( <i>Dendroica striata</i> )	22°50'N 70°42'W 81'NE Grand Caicos Is.	Autumn plumage. Weak. Died noon. X. BM. Wind SSE/5. Good vis
11 Oct	PWGC	Cliff Swallow ( <i>Petrochelidon pyrrhonata</i> )	23°02'N 71°W 78'NNE Caicos Is.	Weak. Died 1900. X. BM
12 Oct	PWGC	Hooded Warbler (F) ( <i>Wilsonia citrina</i> )	24°47'N 74°28'W 40'N San Salvador Is.	X. Released. Light airs. Good vis
12 Oct	WW	Black-bellied/Grey Plover ( <i>Squatarola squatarola</i> )	38°04'N 73°44'W 65'SE Delaware Bay	S few hours
15 Oct	PWGC	Black-throated Blue Warbler (M) ( <i>Dendroica caerulescens</i> )	26°21'N 78°31'W 11'SE Grand Bahamas	X. Arr heavy rain squall, wind N/3. Stunned on wheelhouse window. Landed by pilot and released at Freeport 2030
		Worm-eating Warbler ( <i>Helminthos vermivorus</i> )	.. ..	Flew into window and killed. X. BM
		Yellow Throat ( <i>Geothlypis trichas</i> )	26°30'N 78°46'W Off Bahamas	Arr during heavy rain in night. Found dead. X. BM
15/16 Oct	PWGC	Black-throated Blue Warbler (F or juv)	26°30'N 78°46'W Off Grand Bahamas	Found dead. X. BM
18 Oct	PWGC	Pine Warbler (Ad) ( <i>Dendroica pinus</i> )		Found dead. X. BM
19 Oct	MET	Osprey	23°12'N 68°00'W 200'NE Turk Is.	M.V. <i>Clitoneus</i>
1800				



## ANALYSIS BY SEA AREAS—TABLE C (continued)

1979

Date (time)	Obs.	Species (Latin name)	Posn. (nearest land)	Remarks, wind, weather, etc.
15 Apr 1400Z	MET	American Nighthawk ( <i>Chordeilea minor</i> )	29°20'N 69°54'W 330' SW Bermuda	M.V. Lynton Grange
21-22 Apr	MET	Osprey	18°08'S 34°21'W 230' SE Brazil	M.V. Ros Castle. S 20 hrs

## TABLE D

## CARIBBEAN AND GULF OF MEXICO

1978

Date (time)	Obs.	Species (Latin name)	Posn. (nearest land)	Remarks, wind, weather, etc.
12 Feb	MET	Short-eared Owl ( <i>Asio flammeus</i> )	25°54'N 87°36'W 220' SE New Orleans	M.V. Moray Bank
16 Sept	WW	Northern Waterthrush ( <i>Seiurus noveboracensis</i> )	11°23'N 74°35'W 30' N Columbia	S few hrs
27 Sept	WW	American Redstart (F) ( <i>Setophaga rubicilla</i> )	16°88'N 70°43'W 60' SE Haiti	S few mins
29 Sept	WW	Purple Martin (F) ( <i>Progne subis</i> )	19°19'N 81°41'W	
30 Sept	WW	Northern Waterthrush Blackburnian Warbler ( <i>Dendroica fusca</i> )	140' S Cuba 22°20'N 88°18'W 35' N Yucatan	S
1 Oct	WW	Peregrine ( <i>Falco peregrinus</i> ) Cliff Swallow (2) ( <i>Petrochelidon pyrrhonota</i> )	19°49'N 95°05'W 60' N Mexico	S. Wind easterly

16 Oct	WW	Cattle Egret ( <i>Bulbus ibis</i> ) Baltimore Oriole (M) ( <i>Icterus galbula</i> ) Yellow Throat (3) ( <i>Geothlypis trichas</i> ) Worm-eating Warbler ( <i>Helminthos vermivorus</i> )	13°03'N 78°10'W 270°S Jamaica	S S few hrs S. Exhausted. Died? S. Exhausted. Died?
26 Oct	MET	Osprey ( <i>Pandion haliaetus</i> )	Passage Panama to Puerto Rico	M.V. <i>Taupo</i>
1979				
21 Mar 1400	RLW	Egret sp. n.k.	19°23'N 86°52'W 85'E Yucatan	Flying N
24 Mar	MET	Osprey	24°N 87°W 140'N C. Catoche (Mexico)	S. M.V. <i>Anco Charger</i>
1 Apr 1000	RLW	Swallow (2) ( <i>Hirundo rustica</i> )	24°45'N 87°15'W 190'N Yucatan	Circling ship
5-7 Apr	MET	Sparrow Hawk ( <i>Falco sparverius</i> )	25°18'N 85°30'W 200'N N.W. Cuba	M.V. <i>Roebuck</i>
8 Apr	RLW	Egret sp. (5) Swallow (2)	19°45'N 86°48'W 85'E Yucatan	Flying N C. 2 hrs
14 Apr	RLW	Egret sp. (15)	26°37'N 87°49'W 40'NE Yucatan 160'S Louisiana	Flying E
16 Apr 0830	RLW	Cattle Egret (3) Swallow (2) Purple Martin ( <i>Progne subis</i> )	25°48'N 87°20'W 230'W Florida	Flying N Flying N
1045		Reddish Egret ( <i>Egretta rufescens</i> )	26°17'N 87°32'W 180'S Louisiana	
23 Apr 0800	RLW	Egret sp. (12) Bobolink ( <i>Dolichonyx oryzivorus</i> ) Cattle Egret (7) Chuckwill's Widow ( <i>Caprimulgus carolensis</i> ) Green Heron ( <i>Ardea herodias</i> ) Yellow Throat Sora Rail ( <i>Porzana carolina</i> )	25°09'N 87°18'W 220'N Mexico	ESE/2. Overcast, rain
1600				

## ANALYSIS BY SEA AREAS—TABLE D 1979 (continued)

Date (time)	Obs.	Species (Latin name)	Posn. (nearest land)	Remarks, wind, weather, etc.
25 Apr	RLW	Cape May Warbler ( <i>Dendroica tigrina</i> )	25°14' N 87°31' N 210' N Yucatan	In wheelhouse
27 Jun	WW	Cattle Egret	26°10' N 85°13' W 160' W Florida	Several small groups flying N
6 Jul	WW	Cattle Egret	26°03' N 85°13' W 160' W Florida	S, Exhausted, Wind SE/4
7 Jul	WW	Grey Kingbird ( <i>Tyrannus dominicensis</i> )	Florida Straits 26° N 92° 13' W	S 1 hr
13 Aug 1600	NAA	White Ibis ( <i>Eudocimus albus</i> )	230' SSW Louisiana	S till dark
16 Aug	NAA	Tree Swallow (Several) ( <i>Iridoprocne bicolor</i> )	14°30' N 80°50' W 139' E Nicaragua	S till dusk
17 Aug	NAA	Osprey	11°07' N 80°16' W NNW Panama	C, dep E
5 Nov	JKC	Purple Martin (12)	16°19' N 68°12' W 120' SW Puerto Rico	S overnight. Feeding on flies - cargo of potatoes



TABLE E  
MEDITERRANEAN

1977

The following species were recorded by PWGC at anchorage off Port de Bone, Gulf of Fos (South of France) during period 14th Sept - 1st Oct.

Firecrest (*Regulus ignicapillus*) (1M) 14th, (1M) 16th (2M) 19th, one caught, and subsequently dropped by Blackheaded Gull (*Larus ridibundus*), (2) 20th, (1M) 21st.

Nightingale (*Luscinia megarhynchos*) (1) 15th.

Whitethroat (*Sylvia communis*) (1) 15th.

Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*) (1 Juv) 16th, (1) 27th.

Redstart (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*) (1M) 16th, (1M) 19th.

Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) (1) 16th, (3) 20th, (5) 22nd, (15) 23rd.

Pied Flycatcher (*Ficedula hypoleuca*) (1F) 17th.

Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*) (1F) 1st Oct.

Date (time)	Obs.	Species (Latin name)	Posn. (nearest land)	Remarks, wind, weather, etc.
3 Oct	PWGC	Kestrel (F)	42°17' N 03°56' E 27' E C. Creus	W/5, bc. Dep W
4 Oct 0900-1030	PWGC	Redstart (4) Reed Warbler (3+) ( <i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i> ) Turtle Dove (6) ( <i>Streptopelia turtur</i> ) flava Wagtail ( <i>Motacilla flava</i> ) Starling ( <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i> ) Robin ( <i>Erithacus rubecula</i> ) Song Thrush (2) ( <i>Turdus philomelos</i> )	38°47' N 00°32' E 15' E Spain 32' W Ibiza	Calm, bc

Thirty-one

## ANALYSIS BY SEA AREAS—TABLE E 1977 (continued)

Date (time)	Obs.	Species (Latin name)	Posn. (nearest land)	Remarks, wind, weather, etc.
1620-1730		Redstart (4+) Turtle Dove (4+) Golden Oriole ( <i>Oriolus oriolus</i> ) Robin (5+) Blackcap (M) ( <i>Sylvia atricapilla</i> ) Song Thrush	37°37'N 00°20'W 13'E Spain	
1978				
3 Mar	MET	Duck sp. n.k. (7)	36°40'W 19°55'E Ionian Sea	M.V. Vosges. Flying NE 30-50 ft
15 Mar	MET	Duck sp. (7) Egyptian Goose? ( <i>Alopochen aegyptiacus</i> )	80'SW Greece 32°N 34°05'E 34'WNW Ashdod	M.V. Vosges. Flying NW 100 ft
9 Apr	MET	Kestrel (3M, 1F) Swift ( <i>Apus apus</i> ) Wagtail sp.	33°52'N 32°20'E 55'SW Cyprus 10'E Malta	M.V. Vosges. Kestrel ate Wagtail and Swift
23 Aug	MET	Dunlin (2) ( <i>Calidris alpina</i> ) Olivaceous Warbler ( <i>Hippolais pallida</i> )		M.V. Frontier
4 Sept	MET	Black-eared Wheatear ( <i>Oenanthe hispanica</i> )	35°N 22°E 90'W Crete	M.V. Frontier
16 Sept	MET	Turtle Dove flava Wagtail Stonechat (juv) ( <i>Saxicola torquata</i> )	37°N 5°E 20'N Algeria	M.V. Frontier
20 Oct	MET	Robin (2) Chiffchaff ( <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i> ) White Wagtail ( <i>Motacilla alba</i> )	34°59'N 19°30'E Ionian Sea 100'SW Greece	S.S. Tokyo Bay (Capt. D. G. Brown)

22 Oct 1100-1200	SJH	Chaffinch (F) ( <i>Fringilla coelebs</i> ) Blackcap (F) ( <i>Sylvia atricapilla</i> ) Lark sp. Willow Warbler ( <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i> ) Blue Throat ( <i>Luscinia svecica</i> ) White Wagtail (5) Nightjar ( <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i> )	32°16' N 29°40' E 55° N Alexandria	3/8 high cloud. Fine, good vis. Birds feeding on insects from deck cargo of dressed timber Arr NE. Dep SW
		Tree Sparrow ( <i>Passer montanus</i> ) flava Wagtail Wheatear (2) Nightjar (2) Swallow Nightingale Robin (increased to 6 by 1730) Song Thrush Turtle Dove Whitethroat (M) Spotted Flycatcher ( <i>Muscicapa striata</i> ) Redstart (M)		
23 Oct 1100-1200	SJH	Tree Sparrow ( <i>Passer montanus</i> ) flava Wagtail Wheatear (2) Nightjar (2) Swallow Nightingale Robin (increased to 6 by 1730) Song Thrush Turtle Dove Whitethroat (M) Spotted Flycatcher ( <i>Muscicapa striata</i> ) Redstart (M)	34°03' N 27°48' E 90' SE Crete	Feeding on insects Dep SSW One dep S, one SSW Arr N, dep SSE
24 Oct	SJH	Robin (2) Chaffinch (F) Song Thrush (2)	35°48' N 15°39' E 55' E Malta	Wind NNE/4.4/8 Cu. Feeding on insects
25 Oct.	The following species counted passing ship flying SW:			
	SJH	Robin (55) Chaffinch (6) Blackbird (12) ( <i>Turdus merula</i> ) Linnet (3) ( <i>Acanthis cannabina</i> ) Song Thrush (123) Sand Martin (1) ( <i>Riparia riparia</i> ) White Wagtail(1)	Noon position 38°N 8°06' E 65' SW Sardinia	Some landed briefly onboard. Almost cloudless. NNE/1-2, good vis One with silver ring



## ANALYSIS BY SEA AREAS—TABLE E 1978 (continued)

Date (time)	Obs.	Species (Latin name)	Posn. (nearest land)	Remarks, wind, weather, etc.
26 Oct.	SJH.	Following seen onboard: Robin (25-30) Black Redstart (29) ( <i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i> ) Redstart (2) Chaffinch (2) Song Thrush (2) Spotted Flycatcher Grey Wagtail (M) ( <i>Motacilla cinerea</i> ) Marmora's Warbler (F) ( <i>Sylvia sarda</i> )	At anchor $\frac{1}{2}$ mile off Valencia	Additional birds arriving all day. Some departing for shore. Many feeding on insects.
29 Oct	SJH	Robin (3) Black Redstart (juv M) House Sparrow ( <i>Passer domesticus</i> )	$36^{\circ}14'N$ $40^{\circ}12'W$ S of Malaga	Arr from N
4 Nov	MET	Quail ( <i>Coturnix coturnix</i> ) Black Redstart (Several)	$39^{\circ}57'N$ $22^{\circ}58'E$ G of Thessalonika	R.R.S. <i>Shackleton</i> . Found dead
9 Nov	MET	White Wagtail (3) <i>Phylloscopus</i> Warbler Martin sp.	$38^{\circ}05'N$ $4^{\circ}38'E$ 100' SE Majorca	M.V. <i>Singularity</i> . Onboard

## 1979

12 Mar 0930 1500	TMB	Hoopoe ( <i>Upupa epops</i> )	$36^{\circ}09'N$ $2^{\circ}02'W$ 35' SE C. Gata, Spain	Flew past
14 Mar	TMB	Robin Black-eared Wheatear	$35^{\circ}20'N$ $20^{\circ}E$ Central Ionian 120' SW Greece	S S all day
15 Mar	TMB	White Wagtail	$21^{\circ}58'N$ $31^{\circ}22'E$ 25' N Nile Delta, Egypt	
5 May	RRW	Woodchat Shrike (1 Ad, 1 juv.) ( <i>Lanius senator</i> )	$34^{\circ}N$ $22^{\circ}E$ 90' SW Crete	S

6 May	MET	Kestrel sp.	33°39'N 30°17'E 140'N Egypt	M.V. <i>Vendee</i>
8 May	NAA	House Martin (Several) ( <i>Delichon urbica</i> )	60'N Algerian coast	Large number of hirundines, especially dawn and dusk
11 May	MET	Swallow (Several) Bee-eater ( <i>Merops apiaster</i> )	34°04'N 29°23'E 160'N Egypt	M.V. <i>Vendee</i>
30 May	TMB	Hobby ( <i>Falco subbuteo</i> )	32°17'N 28°08'E 65'N Egypt	
1 Jun	TMB	House Martin Swift sp. ( <i>Apus</i> sp.)	36°31'N 14°20'E 20'S Sicily	Wind S/1. Circled 10 mins

TABLE F  
RED SEA AND GULF OF ADEN

1978

Date (time)	Obs.	Species (Latin name)	Posn. (nearest land)	Remarks, wind, weather, etc.
12 Apr 0330Z	MET	Smyrna Kingfisher ( <i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i> )	13°40'N 42°58'E	M.V. <i>City of Guildford</i> . S 2 hrs
30 Aug	MET	Crane (juv) ( <i>Grus grus</i> )	16°33'N 44°01'E	M.V. <i>Strathaird</i>
4 Sept	MET	Hoopoe ( <i>Upupa epops</i> )	16°07'N 41°18'E	S.S. <i>Benalder</i>
16 Oct	SJH	Meadow Pipit ( <i>Anthus pratensis</i> ) Wheatear (2F) ( <i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i> )	Gulf of Aden	S. Feeding on insects
17 Oct	SJH	Lesser Kestrel (2) ( <i>Falco naumanni</i> )  Wheatear (2F) Little Egret ( <i>Egretta garzetta</i> ) Swallow ( <i>Hirundo rustica</i> )	15°07'N 42°01'E	S. Red Sea. One dep S. one dep SSE S all day Flying S Circled, Dep S

## ANALYSIS BY SEA AREAS—TABLE F 1978 (continued)

Date (time)	Obs.	Species (Latin name)	Posn. (nearest land)	Remarks, wind, weather, etc.
18 Oct	SJH	Turtle Dove (3) ( <i>Streptopelia turtur</i> )	20°24'N 33°38'E	S. Arr from NE
		Swallow	S Red Sea	
11 Nov	MET	Squacco Heron ( <i>Ardeola rallorides</i> )	21°06'N 38°07'E	M.V. Wild Marlin
			Off Jeddah	

1979

8 Mar	MET	Black-headed Wagtail ( <i>Motacilla flava feldegg</i> )	28°N 35°E	S.S. Tokyo Bay
28 Apr	MET	Smyrna Kingfisher	Off Perim Is.	S.S. Cardigan Bay

TABLE G  
INDIAN OCEAN/ARABIAN SEA

1977

Date (time)	Obs.	Species (Latin name)	Posn. (nearest land)	Remarks, wind, weather, etc.
26 Mar	PWGC	Cattle Egret ( <i>Bubulcus ibis</i> )	17°19'S 40°35'E	
			67' SE Mozambique	
28 Mar	PWGC	European Nightjar (M)	28°22'S 33°15'E	S 1½ hrs
		( <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i> )	150' NE Durban	
			37' ESE C. Vidal	
30 May	PWGC	Blue-cheeked Bee-eater ( <i>Merops superciliosus</i> )	15°40'N 57°41'E	Arr W. S. Light airs
			130' SE Kuria Maria Is.	



1978

1 Oct	MET	Grey Heron ( <i>Ardea cinerea</i> )	8°N 73°E 70' SW Minikoi Is.	S.S. <i>Osaka Bay</i> . S 2 hrs
31 Oct	MET	Osprey ( <i>Pandion haliaetus</i> )	16°45' N 55°25' E 30' Arabian coast	M.V. <i>City of Guildford</i> . S 36 hrs
10 Nov	MET	Falcon sp.? Peregrine (2) ( <i>Falco peregrinus</i> ?)	17°47' N 57°05' E Off Arabian coast	M.V. <i>Strath Devon</i> . One ate seabird
18 Nov	MET	Javan Pond Heron ( <i>Ardeola speciosa</i> )	05°N 80°E Arr. 5' off Sri Lanka	S.S. <i>Cardigan Bay</i> . S

1979

11-12 Aug	MET	Roller ( <i>Coracias garrulus</i> )	20' off coast PDRY	M.V. <i>British Tamar</i> . S. Died
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TABLE H  
PERSIAN GULF AND GULF OF OMAN

1977

<i>Date (time)</i>	<i>Obs.</i>	<i>Species (Latin name)</i>	<i>Posn. (nearest land)</i>	<i>Remarks, wind, weather, etc.</i>
13 Mar 1345 1730	PWGC	Pond Heron ( <i>Ardea grayii</i> ) White Wagtail (4) ( <i>Motacilla alba</i> ) Booted Warbler (4) ( <i>Hippolais caligata</i> ) Swallow ( <i>Hirundo rustica</i> )	29°04' N 48°20' E 15' E Kuwait 28°50' N 49°25' E 50' WSW Kharg Is.	S. Arr E, dep W Wind NE/3. All seen onboard. Catching insects, including dragonflies

## ANALYSIS BY SEA AREAS—TABLE H 1977 (continued)

Date (time)	Obs.	Species (Latin name)	Posn. (nearest land)	Remarks, wind, weather, etc.
17 Mar	PWGC	Desert Wheatear (M) ( <i>Oenanthe deserti</i> )	27°05' N 50°27' E 29' NE Ras Tamarah	S

## 1978

25 Sept	DMS	Hoopoe ( <i>Upupa epops</i> )	24°59' N 53°48' E S Persian Gulf 60' N Trucial Oman	
28 Sept	DMS	Common Redstart ( <i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i> ) Egyptian Nightjar ( <i>Caprimulgus aegyptius</i> ) Desert Wheatear	24°43' N 58°40' E S Persian Gulf	S. NW/4, vis 5nm
29 Sept	MET	Egyptian Nightjar (3)	24°39' N 58°47' E Gulf of Oman 50' S Iran	M.V. <i>Strathdoon</i>
17 Oct	DMS	Grey Heron ( <i>Ardea cinerea</i> )	24°54' N 53°26' E S Persian Gulf	Calm, overcast
24 Oct	DMS	White Wagtail	Zuqqum Oilfield	

## 1979

25 Sept	DMS	<i>flava</i> Wagtail (2+) ( <i>Motacilla flava</i> )	28°24' N 48°52' E	S all day
26 Sept	DMS	Grey Wagtail ( <i>Motacilla cinerea</i> ) Desert Wheatear (F) Grey Heron	off Kuwait	At least one amongst several <i>flava</i> Wagtail. Fine, but hazy Flew SW. Lost?
30 Sept	DMS	Hoopoe Swallow (6)	28°06' N 48°44' E Sofaniyah S.	S off oilrig Circling 2am - 4pm
1 Oct	DMS	European Bee-eater ( <i>Merops apiaster</i> ) Wheatear sp. (Several)	" "	S 20 mins Species n.k.

3-26 Oct	DMS	Swallow (Ad and juv) (28)	Offshore, Ras Tanura	Ones and twos daily
3 Oct	DMS	Desert Wheatear (F)	" " "	
8 Oct	DMS	Common Redstart (M)	" " "	
12 Oct	DMS	Spotted Flycatcher ( <i>Musicapa striata</i> )	Berri Oilfield	pm. S. Catching flies
16 Oct	DMS	Scops Owl (2) ( <i>Otus scops</i> )	28°09'N 49°15'E	S all day. One caught, photo-
			Sofaniyah Oilfield	graphed. NW/3. Fine/clear
18 Oct	DMS	Short-eared Owl ( <i>Asio flammeus</i> )	27°50'N 49°50'E	S am. Shy. Photographed
22 Oct	DMS	Turnstone ( <i>Arenaria interpres</i> )	Berri Oilfield	S briefly
24 Oct	DMS	Squacco Heron ( <i>Ardeola ralloides</i> )	" "	Arr NE, dep SW
25 Oct	DMS	White Wagtail	" "	S
			" "	
26 Oct	DMS	Short-toed Lark ( <i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i> )	Berri Oilfield	S few mins
30 Oct.	DMS	Desert Wheatear (F)	" "	
2 Nov	DMS	Isabelline Red-tailed Shrike ( <i>Lanius isobellinus</i> )	" "	S
5 Nov	DMS	Bittern (2) ( <i>Botaurus stellaris</i> )	27°11'N 49°39'E	Flying SW. Wind NW/6. Fine
6 Nov	DMS	Chiffchaff ( <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i> )	26°45'N 50°08'E	S
7 Nov	DMS	European Nightjar ( <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i> )	28°17'N 49°28'E	S 6 hrs

## TABLE 1

### PACIFIC

1978

Thirty-nine	Date (time)	Obs.	Species (Latin name)	Posn. (nearest land)	Remarks, wind, weather, etc.
	12 May	MET	Cattle Egret ( <i>Bubulcus ibis</i> )	11°52'N 91°00'W 120°W El Salvador	M.V. <i>Anco Stane</i> . Wind E/3
	7 Oct	MET	Hobby ( <i>Falco subbuteo</i> )	42°10'N 162°10'E 600' SE Kuril Is.	M.V. <i>Anchusa</i> (Capt. A. J Palmer). Onboard. Passage 080° 1200' until 45°N 175° 40'W

## ANALYSIS BY SEA AREAS—TABLE I 1978 (continued)

Date (time)	Obs.	Species (Latin name)	Posn. (nearest land)	Remarks, wind, weather, etc.
11 Oct	MET	Ruddy Kingfisher ( <i>Halcyon coromanda</i> )	06°10' N 103°19' E Off coast Malaysia	M.V. <i>British Maple</i>
18 Oct	MET	Osprey ( <i>Pandion haliaetus</i> ) Peregrine ( <i>Falco peregrinus</i> )	08°30' N 89°00' W 220' SW Costa Rica	M.V. <i>Prince Rupert City</i>

1979

16 Mar	KEH	Swallow (2) ( <i>Hirundo rustica</i> )	29°32' N 132°37' E 120' SE Tanego Sima (Japan)	S. Wind NE/2
3 Jun	MET	Myrtle Warbler ( <i>Dendroica coronata</i> )	36° N 124° W 120' SW San Francisco	M.V. <i>Victoria City</i> S 2 days

## TABLE J

## PHILIPPINE SEA, SOUTH CHINA SEA, AND SEA OF JAPAN

1978

Date (time)	Obs.	Species (Latin name)	Posn. (nearest land)	Remarks, wind, weather, etc.
17 Aug 0900	SJH	Common Sandpiper (3) ( <i>Tringa hypoleucos</i> ) Sanderling ( <i>Calidris alba</i> )	38°05' N 134°04' E 140' NW Honsu Is. (Japan)	S 10 hrs. Fed on insects (moths). 8/8 Cu., drizzle. Wind N/4
17 Sept	SJH	Siberian Blue Robin (4) ( <i>Luscinia cyane</i> )	30°51' N 125°50' E 180' E China mainland	S till 18th. Photos. 1 Ad, 3 juv. Light airs, fine, good vis.
18 Sept	SJH	Blue Rock Thrush (juv M) ( <i>Monticola solitarius</i> )	24°40' N 125°03' E 10' SW Kurema Is.	S 5 hrs. Photos.



19 Sept	SJH	Swallow (c.80) ( <i>Hirundo rustica</i> ) flava Wagtail (2) ( <i>Motacilla flava</i> )	18°29'N 124°34'E 140'E Luzon 300'S SE Taiwan	Arr small group (max 19) from N dep S. Ht 100-200 ft. Some circled and rested. Wind SE × E/3 2/8 Cu, good vis M.V. Baron Ardrossan. Typhoon "Rita" 150'N S 2 days
29 Oct	MET	Scops Owl ( <i>Otus scops</i> ) plus 2 unid. sp.	14°N 115°30'E 300'SW Philippines	
21 Nov	KEH	Arctic Warbler (3) ( <i>Phylloscopus</i> <i>borealis</i> )	18°37'N 120°28'E 20'NW Philippines	S 3 days
24 Nov	KEH	Crested Goshawk ( <i>Accipiter</i> <i>trivirgatus</i> )		
25 Nov	KEH	Japanese Robin ( <i>Erithacus akahige</i> ) Grey Nightjar (8) ( <i>Caprimulgus</i> <i>indicus</i> ) White-browed Crane ( <i>Porzana</i> <i>cinerea</i> )	6°57'N 115°34'E 60'NW Borneo Off Lumut (Malaysia)	Found dead Arr heavy rain. 2F. X S. Skulking. Dep W

#### 1979

16 Mar	KEH	Blue Rock Thrush (M)	40°N 135°E 210'NW Japan	
20 Mar	KEH	Sanderling (Several)	69°41'N 117°23'E 45'W Philippines	Several resting on small clumps of floating seaweed
3 Apr	DMS	Crow-billed Drongo (4) ( <i>Dicrurus</i> <i>annectans</i> )	6°37'N 115°47'E 34'WNW N. Borneo	S oil platform. Catching dragonflies

ANALYSIS BY SEA AREAS—TABLE J 1979 (*continued*)

The following species were recorded by DMS on Tenbungo Oilrig (off N. Borneo), 20 Apr - 4 May:

20 Apr Sanderling (2). One stayed until night of 4th/5th. Fed fish. Photos.

28 Apr Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*). S 6 hrs. Tried to catch small bird (Shrike?).

28/29 Apr Brown Shrike (*Lanius cristatus*). flava Wagtail (4). Barn Swallow.

3 May Purple Heron (*Ardea purpurea*). Settled.

4 May Collared Kingfisher (*Halcyon chloris*).

Date (time)	Obs.	Species (Latin name)	Posn. (nearest land)	Remarks, wind, weather, etc.
19 Apr	PGM	Swallow	14°N 115°E 200'S Paracel Is.	Arr SE, dep NW. Ht 50 ft
20 Apr 0600	PGM	House Martin (3) ( <i>Delichon urbica</i> )	15°40'N 117°10'E	Circled ship
1745		House Martin	150'W Philippines 17°N 118°30'E 100'W Luzon	
24 Apr 1755	PGM	House Martin (7)	30°N 132°30'E 60'S Japan	Circling ship
25 Apr	PGM	Red-rumped Swallow (Several) ( <i>Hirundo daurica</i> )	33°19'N 130°06'E 20'SE Japan	Several sheltering onboard Wind SW/5 then NE/5



Great White Heron, *Ardea occidentalis*. Florida Keys



Black-throated Blue Warbler, *Dendroica caerulescens*

Photos: Captain R. L. Westwater. Caribbean

## SOME EXTRACTS FROM METEOROLOGICAL REPORTS

1978/1979

*Note by Editor.* Captain N. B. J. Stapleton is heavily committed temporarily in the publication of his book on the history and development of the brass funnelled naval steam picket boat, an outstanding element in the duties covered in harbour by every battleship of earlier days.

I am therefore undertaking the selection from the increased observations received each month from our meteorological log reports on birds observed over the period terminating in November, 1978

During the period, something like 100 extracts have been received from separate ships by the Meteorological Office, their narratives and sketches having helped to identify seabirds and landbirds quoted.

In many cases positive identifications have been quoted and logged. In such cases, owing to our printing space available we hope that Masters of such ships will excuse the exclusion of their reports in this volume, unless of some unusual or particular interest.

In some cases, however, the identity of species has proved more difficult, and it may help for the future if some examples of certain species may be quoted.

### OSPREYS (*Pandion haliaetus*)

Ospreys range widely around almost the whole world, and as a fish-eating species frequently occur at sea, often alighting high up on ships' masts. Appearing as relatively large eagle types, some 20-23 ins. (51-58 cms.) in length, with long angled wings, they may be distinguished by the hooked bill, whitish crown and nape, and a dark broad band across and down the sides of the head. Upperwings are brown, underparts white with light brown speckling on the breast. Underwings appear slightly barred, with dark leading primaries extending like fingers in flight. Eyes are pale yellow.

### MERLINS (*Falco columbarius*)

Differing races occur, also widespread, across northern areas of Europe, eastern Russia, north Asia and America, including the Caribbean, and have been observed regularly out at sea, remaining sometimes on passages, harrying and killing any small birds which may be sheltering onboard. They are small falcons, 10-12 ins. (25-33 cms.) in length, often with a rapid dashing flight. They show grey or brown streaking only around head and cheeks, with no moustachial streak. Males have slate-blue upperparts, nape and underparts darkly streaked buff. Dark primaries,



grey tails with a broad black terminal band. The larger females have dark brown upperparts, and whitish underparts with brown vertical streaking.

#### OSPREY REPORTS - 1978/79

Note: The dates shown are those on which observations were made, and not the date of receipt of relevant Met. Log Extract.

- M.V. *Trader* (34931). Capt. R. J. Smith.  
Trinidad towards U.K. 8th May, 1978  
M.V. *Prince Rupert City* (34956). Capt. K. D. Whitting.  
Vancouver to Panama 18th Oct., 1978  
M.V. *Clytoneus* (34944). Capt. C. Mackinnon.  
200 miles N. of Mona Is. (Caribbean) 19th Oct., 1978  
M.V. *Anco Charger* (35580). Capt. K. Lewis.  
Gulf of Mexico 24th March, 1979  
M.V. *Anco Princess* (35781). Capt. T. M. Fairclough.  
South China Sea 27th April, 1979  
S.S. *Opalia* (35809). Capt. S. W. Dean.  
10 miles SSW. San Salvador Is. (Bahamas) 25th April, 1979

#### MERLIN REPORTS

- M.V. *Atlantic Project* (35149). Capt. Oseroft  
North Atlantic crossing. When 200 miles from Bishop Rock,  
Merlin seen killing small birds onboard 18th-23rd Sept., 1978  
M.V. *Voyager* (34847). Capt. D. Forbes and J. D. Jeavons.  
Quebec to Rotterdam 12th Aug., 1978  
At 53°19'N, 43°37'W, at sea off Newfoundland, Merlin  
onboard. Later at 49°46'N, 8°38'W, a Merlin onboard  
26th Sept., 1978  
M.V. *Gala* (35569). Capt. B. A. Boyer.  
Gulf of Mexico (Bay of Campeche) 21st Sept., 1978

#### EXTRACTS FROM A NUMBER OF ADDITIONAL REPORTS OF OTHER SPECIES

Note by Editor: Many more interesting Met. Log reports have been received in addition to those included, and narratives much appreciated, but printing space unfortunately cannot absorb more than a pure random selection here included.

The most recent Met. Log Extracts received from the Met. Office have included excellent sketches. Too late for *Sea Swallow*, 1978/79 issue.

- M.V. *Clan Macnab* (34868). Capt. R. E. Todd.  
Between Aden and Mombasa at 6°30'N, 49°30'E, at sea  
off Somaliland (no date given), a European Roller came  
aboard. This species is a common winter visitor and passage  
migrant throughout East Africa

- M.V. *Clytoneus* (34944). Capt. C. Mackinnon.  
On 26th October, 1978, at 32°50'N, 72°35'W, some distance from South Carolina, a flock of 8 Herons landed on-board, and considered from their description to have been Louisiana Herons (*Hydranassa tricolor ruficollis*). This species occurs near the coast northwards to North Carolina 26th Oct., 1978
- \*M.V. *Clan Graham* (35002). Capt. T. R. Parsons.  
Chittagong anchorage 10th Sept., 1978
- \*M.V. *City of Guildford* (35558). Capt. A. G. Hine.  
Passage Colombo to Jiddah 12th April, 1978
- \*S.S. *Cardigan Bay* (35572). Capt. W. P. Goldie.  
Port Kelang to Suez 28th April, 1979  
\*All three ships above reported White-throated or Smyrna Kingfishers (*Halcyon smyrnensis*) onboard, with good sketches and descriptions.
- S.S. *Liverpool Bay* (35680). Capt. E. J. Webb  
Jiddah (Red Sea) towards Japan. At 5°48'N, 96°18'E, a Hooded Pitta (*Pitta sordida*) was identified onboard through a good sketch 20th April, 1978
- S.S. *British Pioneer* (35506). Capt. G. Roberts.  
During the evening at 33°30'N, 14°W a Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*) was seen hunting a Swallow, which escaped. A number had been onboard for some days 2nd May, 1978
- M.V. *Strathaird* (35166). Capt. J. M. Burns.  
Suez to Aden. An immature Crane (*Grus grus*) was observed 30th Aug., 1978  
Later, Aden to Muscat. A Hoopoe (*Upupa epops*) came on-board. 2nd Sept., 1978
- M.V. *Moray Bank* (35406). Capt. G. A. Davies.  
At 25°54'N, 87°36'E, 200 miles off Mexico, Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*) onboard 12th Feb., 1978
- M.V. *Strathdevon* (35734). Capt. F. A. Stokes.  
At 17°47'N, 57°05'E, a large Falcon landed on a derrick, eating a seabird. Considered to have been a Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*). Later, a similar but smaller Falcon arrived, but was not identified 10th Nov., 1978

## SHORT NOTES

### BIRDS VISITING OIL RIGS

M.V. *Forties Kiwi* (34686). Captain J. Guy, c/o. B.P. Petroleum Development, Dyce, Aberdeen. On 6th August, 1978, when on station in Forties Field, 59°44'N, 00°54'E, a number of land-birds were observed onboard during the week, and positively identified. 2 Collared Doves (*Streptopelia decaocto*), 2 Grey Herons (*Ardea cinerea*), 3 Dunlins (*Calidris alpina*), 4 Redshanks



(*Tringa totanus*), 5 Turnstones (*Arenaria ostralegus*), flying from east to west, 2 males, 1 female and 2 young Golden Plovers (*Pluvialis apricarus*).

In addition, a female Ruff or possibly a Yellowleg (*Tringa flavipes*) was observed.

#### FALL OF BIRDS IN FOG

Oil Rig "Key Gibraltar". 1st Officer K. P. Harris, M.N., operating with the "Offshore Marine" and onboard the Oil Rig Supply Tender *Pacific Shore*, provided an interesting account of his experience on passage from Ijmuiden (Netherlands) in October, 1978, to the rig "Key Gibraltar" anchored 4 miles off Scheveningen. The weather was very foggy and on the 25 miles run down the coast, lots of birds started to land onboard. By midnight there were already over 300 on deck and sleeping all over the bridge; Fieldfares, Skylarks, Pied Wagtails, Grey or Yellow Wagtails, Linnets, Blackcaps, Blackbirds, a Redpoll and a Long-eared Owl on the foremast, and certainly other unidentified species. There was much "to-ing and fro-ing" between the rig and *Pacific Shore*, both being well lit, and visibility down to 10 yards at times. Food and water was put out, and all taken. The following day the fog cleared and all the birds, save a few Chaffinches and a Blue Tit, dispersed.

A few days later, on the way back to Ijmuiden in fine clear weather, Harris reported that he observed "a huge Albatross" close to a Great Black-backed Gull. He had no doubt in his mind that it was a Black-browed Albatross, as he had seen hundreds of such Albatrosses off the Cape and around Australia.

It is presumed that this one was indeed the Black-browed Albatross (*Diomedea melanophrys*) which has already been reported before in the North Sea area.

#### OIL RIG OFFSHORE - SAUDI ARABIA - SAFANIYA OILFIELD

Captain D. M. Simpson has now returned from servicing an Oil Rig off Borneo and is now back in the Persian Gulf, engaged in rig shifting by M.V. *Pacific Builder* (handling tug) at Safaniya oilfield (offshore Saudi Arabia), at 28°24'N, 48°52'E. During the period between 25th September and 1st October, 1979, the following landbirds were recorded: 2 Turtle Doves (*Streptopelia turtur*), on flight platform, 1 Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flava*) (onboard), 1 Purple Heron (*Ardea purpurea*), 1 Hoopoe (*Upupa epops*) (on heliopad, as helicopter landed), 6 Barn Swallows (*Hirundo rustica*), 1 European Bee-eater (*Merops apiaster*) (on oil rig, Pool 142), 1 Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*), 1 Desert Wheatear (*Oenanthe deserti*) (onboard), 1 Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*).

## NEW MEMBERS, 1979

- Wilkie, M. M., Capt. M.N., Mount Pleasant, James Street, Hunters Quay, Argyll  
Hutchinson, J. R., 2nd Officer M.N., Crawford, Salisbury Lane, Over Wallop, Stockbridge, Hants. PO20 8JJ  
Greener, A. J., Capt. M.N., 225 Pickhurst Lane, West Wickham, Kent BR4 0HJ  
Watkins, L. M., 2nd Officer M.N., 27 Hollybush Lane, Hemel Hempstead, Herts. HP1 2PQ  
Sizeland, M. D., Cdr. R.N., H.M.S. *Royal Arthur*, Corsham, Wilts. SH13 9RE  
Wilford, A. W., Capt. M.N., 29 Park Lane, Cottingham, North Humberside  
Coulter, R. G., C.P.O., M.A.E. 1st Class, Vale View, Mt Pleasant, Sturford, near Salisbury, Wilts.  
Collins, A. E., Ch. Cook M.N., 72 Elliston Avenue, Great Barr, Birmingham B44 8TJ  
Marlow, I. A. J., Lt. R.N., Hill View, Pound Lane, Meonstoke, Southampton SO3 1NP  
Hunter, T. H., C.P.O., O.A.E. 1st Class, 64 South Path, Rowner, Gosport, Hants.  
Wilkins, A. K., Radio Officer M.N., 26a Western Road, Westbury on Trym, Bristol SO2 7IO  
Jones, R. A., 2nd Officer M.N., 39 Harting Gardens, Portchester, Fareham, Hants. PO16 8DX  
Stone, D. F. W., Ch. Officer M.N., 47 Alpine Avenue, Tolworth, Surbiton, Surrey KT5 9RL  
Allen, R. H. M., Ch. Officer M.N., 19 Winfield Lane, Ashton, Preston, Lancs. PR2 1NQ  
Harris, R. P., 1st Officer M.N., 40 Moody Road, Stubbington, Hants.  
Portsmouth, M., Petty Officer R.N. (POMEM), H.M.S. *Sheffield*, c/o. B.F.P.O. Ships  
Louch, A. R., 3rd Officer M.N., 5 Gentian Close, Northfield, Birmingham B31 1NN  
Witts, B. F., Lieut. R.N., F.R.G.S., H.M.S. *Excellent*, Portsmouth, Hants.

## NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

- Dr J. A. Gibson, Foremount House, Kilbarchan, Renfrewshire, Scotland PA10 2E2  
G. Donald Kucera, 3366-B, North Chapel Avenue, Tucson, Arizona 85716, U.S.A.  
J. Faldborg, Sondergade, 14, 4690 Hasley, Denmark  
Peter Harrison, Haxter Lodge, Roborough, Plymouth

*Forty-eight*



Conroy, J. W. H., Esq., B.Sc., M.Sc., Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, Monk's Wood Experimental Station, Abbot's Ripton, Huntingdon PE17 2LS

#### OBITUARY

Captain A. C. Bray, R.N. (retd.). Died 1979. (Life Member since 1947.)

Captain M. G. Simpson, M.N. Died 1978. (Member since 1967)

Commander W. E. Glass, R.N. Died 1979. (Life Member since 1946.)

Dr C. Suffern, M.B.O.U. Died 1978.

#### MEMBERSHIP SUMMARY

Ex-Officio	7
Hon. Members	10
Life Members (original)	39
Life Members	12
Ordinary Members	267
Corporate Members	14
TOTALS	$335 + 14 \text{ Corporate Members} = 349$

TOTAL OF ASSOCIATE MEMBERS, MUSEUMS,  
LIBRARIES, ETC.  
= 90